(c) if so, whether Government propose to fix responsibility for the purchase of defective vessels etc; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) and (b) The Shipping Corporation of India has acquired vessels from Romanian and East German Shipyards. Some defects in the Crane and Auxiliary Engines were noticed in these vessels subsequently. No amount is outstanding for payment against the shipyards.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Rail accidents

929. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of railway accidents which took place during the last three years, indicating the number of casualties and number of persons injured during this period;

(b) what are the main causes of the accidents and what remedial measures are being taken by Government; and

(c) whether it is a fact that railway tracks are not properly maintained and there is no effective coordination between various wings of the Railways?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD): (a) Number of freight and passenger train accidents during the last three years and number of casualties therein is as under:—

Year	No. of accidents	No. of casualties	
		Killed	Injured
1986-87	644	267	777
1987-88	604	216	473
1988-89	545	244	840

(b) Failure of railway staff, equipment failure and failure of road users were the major causes of accidents.

The following steps are being taken to prevent accidents;

(i) Greater emphasis on training, refresher courses, etc. to safety categories of staff viz., drivers, station masters assistant station masters, guard, switchmen and cabinmen etc.

(ii) Revamping of training systems, methods and procedures, etc. through use of modern teaching aids like slide projectors, practical demonstrations, etc.

(iii) Greator emphasis upon rehabilitation of rolling stock, including passenger coaches.

(iv) Increased pace of track renewals.

(v) Induction of sophisticated technology of supplement human vigilance viz., auxiliary warning system, axle counters, etc.

(vi) Ultrasonic testing of axles and rails.

(vii) Modernisation of workshops to improve the quality of repairs and maintenance.

(viii) Educative campaigns through the medium of All India Radio Doordarshan for educating the road users about the precautions to be observed while negotiating level crossings.

(ix) Enlisting the co-operation of State Governments to educate road users before issue|renewal of driving licences.

(c) No, Sir.

Presence of Indian Armed Forces Personnel in Afghanistan

930. SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian army personnel and also Airforce men are fighting along with Afghan Government forces against Afghan rebels;

(b) if so, what is the number of such Indian personnel;

(c) what is expenditure involved; and

(d) how long these forces are likely to remain in Afghanistan?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Indian Prisoners in Pakistan

931. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards the news item captioned 'Fate of Indian Detenus in Pakistan Sealed' published in the Times of India, Bombay dated the April 1, 1989;

(b) if so, according to Government of India, how many Indian prisoners are in Pakistani Jails and since when;

(c) what steps Government have taken for thier releasing; and

(d) what is the response of Pakistan Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The estimated number of Indian nationals in Pakistani jails is 1030. The precise date from which each individual has been detained is not known.

(c) and (d) Government are in continuous dialogue with the Government of Pakistan for the release and repatriation of Indian nationals in Pakistan Jails.

Non-payment of Salaries to Marine Officers by Foreign Ships

932. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a blanket ban has been imposed on the merchant marine officers joining foreign ships, if so, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether it is a fact that several shipping companies including the Mackinon Mackenizie and Co., the Hede Navigation and Ratnakar Shipping, have not paid salaries for several months to the marine officers;

(c) what are the reasons for imposing such a ban; and

(d) what action Government have taken to prevail upon such companies to pay the dues to the concerned officers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (d) Information has been received of non-payment of certain dues from the mentioned companies and the pendency of suits before the Courts. Payment of salaries of Marine Officers are governed by MUI Agreement between officer's union and shipping companies. Directorate General